



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

"THE DOCTOR" ONCE MORE

IN the January issue we published a reproduction of "The Doctor" by Luke Fildes, a work of art, reproductions of which in every form are found in more homes of rich and poor than are most of the masterpieces of the world. It represents a doctor of noble appearance seated scanning intensely the face of a sick child who lies before him on a chair in a peasant's cottage. The light of a lamp streams upon both, while the father, standing in the background by the side of the mother, seated at a table and prostrate with fear, tries to arouse in her hopes for her sick child. We said this is a great work of art—because it stirs the finest emotions of all normal people.

Devotees of degenerate modernism in art raise objections. W. H. de B. N. in the February *International Studio* said of this picture: "First and foremost, its significance is *literary*—in other words, it is an anecdote expressed in terms of paint instead of words." Since Mr. N. was guilty of writing a "Foreword" for the catalogue of the Modernistic Exhibition of 1916 he is true to form when he uses this word "literary" as a term of reproach for a work of art—merely because it tells a story.

The use of the word "literary" to belittle a great work of art became long ago a nauseating camouflage used by the advertisers of the creators and sellers of the extreme modernistic art trash, a movement begun by the Post-Impressionists and accentuated by the Cubistic, Futuristic and Vorticistic fabricators of incomprehensible art. According to these a work of art in verse, on canvas or in stone, in which *an idea* is expressed—anything beyond merely clever but empty riming, painting or carving, or in which a story is told, or a drama unfolded which appeals to the heart of mankind and lifts the soul to laughter, rapture or tears—is "literary," is "bourgeois," middle-class, not "chic" nor "smart." That is, it is not delectable to the dilettanti and the longfinger-nailed, neurotic Mandarins of art, who, from their lofty "Ivory Towers" look down upon all moral art with a contemptuous sneer, while they keep pontifically on, spunging on their fellow mortals who labor and sweat that they may even live!

According to these gentry the greatest works of the greatest artists of the past were great only for the past. But to-day—ho! ho! they are *passés*, "out-of-date," "not art at all" because they are now "literary"—and this only because a few moral misfits or cackling literary chicks have had the cynical impertinence to say so, to the gradual degradation of art all along the line in all countries. The works of these art Bohemians, denizens of the absinthe and kaffee dives of Europe, are pur-

chased less and less, even by the bewildered amateurs of art, because the latter are beginning to see that they are sans drawing, sans composition, sans ideas, sans everything that makes art truly great!

The following pictures are nothing but "anecdotes in paint instead of words": "Creation" by Michelangelo, "Transfiguration" by Raphael, "Assumption" by Titian, "The Surrender of Breda" by Velasquez, "Night Watch" by Rembrandt, "Descent from the Cross" by Rubens, "Raft of the Medusa" by Géricault, "Barque of Dante" by Delacroix, "St. Denis" by Puvis de Chavannes, etc.; all the greatest works of the ages are nothing but anecdotes or stories told in paint!

Mr. N. says further: "Secondly, it (the picture) offends through its excessive sentimentality" [this is stupid, because he might as well call "Macbeth" sentimental because it is *dramatic*] "and thirdly, it lacks greatness through overelaboration, so many details *interfering with the center of interest* and leaving nothing to the imagination." This third objection is at least a sane difference of opinion. But it is absolutely wrong. Because the doctor in the picture is so overwhelmingly the center of interest that, let the eyes and mind wander over the picture ever so much, they will be forced to return and study the faces of the doctor and the child—because upon them the entire light of the lamp is concentrated, while the rest is in shadow in the background. We admit that, if the father and mother had been left out of the background, we would still have an effective work, but it would be less *dramatic*, hence less emotion-stirring, which is the aim of all truly great art.

But there is the rub! The senseless protagonists of the weird modernistic, æsthetic theory preach: art should mean only *technique* and *craftsmanship*; in a picture, or rather in a "painting," there should be only a clever ping-ponging of paint, most often over a badly designed canvas. This is the gospel of the Bolsheviki in art, to stem which is the patriotic duty of every good citizen who is anxious about the enduring quality of American civilization. To do the contrary may be, temporarily, good business, but it is bad morals and the cutting off of one's nose to spite one's face, as the myopic Modernists may discover, but perhaps too late. Does Mr. N. see no warning in the anarchism of Russia? And is he so lacking in perspicacity that he cannot see that anarchism in art breeds Bolshevism in life? Can he not see that in supporting the corrupt Modernistic movement in art, he and the *International Studio* are working against the best interests of both England and America?

